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7 May 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/NFA

FROM: Senior Review Panel

SUBJECT: The Need for a Larger Framework for  
Structuring NIEs Dealing with the  
Soviet Union

Background

1. In a number of conversations with your predecessor, the Panel discussed its concerns with the subject of this memorandum. It was agreed that we would forward our thoughts on a possible new approach.

2. We support [ ]'s concept for and approach to 11-3/8-81, and have just commented on the Terms of Reference for that estimate. We were pleased that detailed treatment of the broader military-political and foreign policy aspects of Soviet strategic thinking will be switched from 11-3/8-81 to a new 11-4. Present planning visualizes a Memo to Holders of 11-4-78 to be published in May 1981, with a full blown new 11-4 being initiated in the fall of 1981, based in part on the East-West paper being developed under State auspices with respect to Soviet global objectives.

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3. We think these are valid measures for the near term, but believe there is an additional range of problems on the Soviet question. Accordingly, we suggest that the Community should move away from the relatively narrow concept that makes an assessment of Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities the centerpiece of national appraisal efforts on the Soviet Union and move toward a broader, more integrated estimate of Soviet policies and capabilities. The present approach omits too much of the Soviet threat to our interests. A wider focus would permit a more complete and balanced assessment.

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Mid-Field Soviet Estimates

4. For reference, a list of the most recently published and planned NIE lls is at Attachment 1 and of planned regional NIEs and ILMs pertaining to the Soviet Union at Attachment 2. As is evident, Community efforts in recent years to produce a broad policy estimate--integrating domestic and foreign affairs and dealing with political, military, and economic subject matter--have been sparse.

5. We think the new interagency production forecast constitutes a fairly well balanced and comprehensive program which, given priority of effort, should be within available analytic capabilities of the Community. There may be a few gaps in planned coverage. For examples, some which have occurred to us as possible candidates include:

--A more specific focus on Soviet objectives, capabilities and intentions in the following regions:

NE Asia  
SE Asia  
The Horn of Africa--Arabian Peninsula  
Northern Africa

--The Poland problem, Eastern Europe and Soviet equities.

--An integrated study of the Soviet energy problem and prospects for the future.

--Soviet disinformation and deception campaigns.

--Soviet economic warfare.

6. There may be other thin areas which a further review of NIE ll series might indicate as needed for a comprehensive Soviet estimate.

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7. When this initial series of planned NIEs and IIMs on Soviet affairs--with whatever supplements are desired--is in hand, the entire group should be reviewed. For those that are to be retained and continued into the future, organizational arrangements should be validated to ensure specific analytic and collection resource allocations, and defined intervals should be established for systematic, integrated assessments.

Series 11: Capstone

8. We believe there remains a clear need for an overall NIE on Soviet goals, capabilities and intentions worldwide--an expanded 11-4 in effect. This capstone central estimate would tie together the mid-field estimates on various aspects of Soviet policy, doctrine, capabilities, performance, intentions and prospects in the international, global arena. It would set these against a broad politico-military framework of Soviet perceptions, doctrine, and strategy for the use of force across the military spectrum.

9. We think a concept paper for such a capstone estimate should be worked out at senior Agency levels and approved by SIG-Intelligence. We would not wish now to attempt to describe the terms, but we think it should deal with all or some of the following:

-- An assessment of the goals and expectations of the Soviet Union in an international context and the political-economic-industrial-military-sociological-psychological bases of Soviet national power. It should have defined time frames varying from five to ten years for different subjects. It should examine constraints on the USSR as well as its strategy, doctrine and policy for the employment of national power, including the use of surrogates. It should probably be broken out by geographic regions, and should bring out Soviet interests versus US and Western interests, the relative weight of those interests, and the balance of advantages between the USSR and US.

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10. Many, if not most, of the building blocks\* necessary to support such a capstone estimate already exist or are now planned. Additional analyses required appear to be within the range of feasibility. Of course, the process of developing this family of estimates is a circular one with continuous iterations, supporting analyses and feedback.

11. The most difficult aspect may be finding a principal drafter, or task force, to develop an integrated estimate of this magnitude and complexity. We have two suggestions:

a. Given the dearth of such broad gauged generalists within NFAC, we believe the search for such individuals, on a recruitment or contract basis, should be started immediately.

b. Beyond this point, some new organizational structures, within NFAC, may be indicated to deal more effectively with its durable No. 1 problem: estimative analysis of the Soviet Union. Acceptance of responsibility for the production of the mid-field and capstone estimates may well provide the focal point for the role and mission of any new Soviet analytical organization.

\*The outstanding NFAC IA, an interoffice effort entitled "The Development of Soviet Military Power," April 1981 and chaired by [redacted], OSR, is a good example of such a building block. This IA pulls together the results of many military, economic, political and demographic assessments pertaining to the Soviet military buildup during the Brezhnev era. It describes that buildup in detail and discusses the projected political strains and economic constraints associated with current Soviet policies with respect to defense.

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Conclusions

12. The Panel suggests that:


a. A group of senior NFAC officers be tasked to determine the feasibility of the project; and if affirmative, recommend to you the concept, scope and TOR for the estimate, ways to correct building block or mid-estimate gaps, and a work/resource plan to carry out the project, including any new organizational arrangements required. After your approval, this project should be placed in interagency channels.

b. The present Series 11 estimates and related projects under way continue as planned, but the overall program be examined, in conjunction with the work plan developed per paragraph 12a above, for adequacy in the light of the overarching central estimate they support.

c. Appropriate parts of the current NFAC production plan be reviewed for conformity with the basic project.

d. An appropriate consultant panel along the NIE 11-3/8 model be organized at the appropriate time to advise the Community on the estimate.

13. The main present objective should be to gain recognition of the need for a central Soviet estimate; obtain acceptance of the basic approach; and get the project under way.

  
William Leonhart

Attachments:  
As stated

cc: C/NIC  
ANIO/USSR-EE  
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